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STATEMENT BY THE PRESIDENT OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL

At the 3738th meeting of the Security council, held on 7 February 1997 in connection with the Council's consideration of the item entitled "The situation in the Great Lakes region", the President of the Security Council made the following statement on behalf of the Council:

"The Security Council expresses its grave concern at the deteriorating situation in the Great Lakes region, in particular Eastern Zaire, and at its humanitarian consequences on the refugees and inhabitants of the region. It calls for an end to the hostilities and the withdrawal of all external forces, including mercenaries.

"The Security Council also expresses its deep concern over the humanitarian crisis in the region and urges all parties to allow humanitarian agencies and organizations access to deliver humanitarian assistance to those in need. It also demands that the parties ensure the safety of all refugees and displaced persons as well as the security and freedom of movement of all United Nations and humanitarian personnel. It underlines the obligation of all concerned to respect the relevant provisions of international humanitarian law.

"The Security Council reaffirms its commitment to the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Zaire and other States in the Great Lakes region; and to the principle of the inviolability of borders. In this connection, the Council calls upon all the States in the region to refrain, in accordance with their obligations under the Charters of the United Nations and the Organization of the African Unity, from any act, including cross-border incursions, which would threaten the sovereignty and territorial integrity of any State and exacerbate the situation in the region, including endangering the refugees and displaced persons. It also calls upon these States to create the conditions necessary for the speedy and peaceful resolution of the crisis.

"The Security Council expresses its full support for the joint United Nations/Organization of African Unity Special Representative for the Great Lakes region, Ambassador Mohammed Sahnoun, in the fulfilment of his mandate

as set out in the letter of the Secretary-General to the President of the Security Council dated 22 January 1997 (S/1997/73). It urges all parties in the region to cooperate fully with the mission of the Special Representative in the search for a peaceful settlement to the crisis and calls upon Member States to provide the Special Representative with all necessary support including logistical support. It also encourages other facilitators and representatives of the regional organizations, including the European Union and the States concerned, to coordinate closely their efforts with those of the Special Representative.

"The Security Council reaffirms the importance of holding an international conference on peace, security and development in the Great Lakes region under the auspices of the United Nations and the Organization of African Unity.

"The Security Council welcomes all efforts, including those of the Organizations and States of the region aimed at resolving the crisis, and in particular, the initiative of President Daniel arap Moi of Kenya and other Heads of States and encourages them to continue their efforts.

"The Security Council will remain seized of the matter."